

Advocare is an independent but government funded advocacy agency. We support older people experiencing or at risk of mistreatment by family or friends, and those receiving aged care services, to assert their rights and maintain their own best interests. We also help people resolve complaints and concerns related to residential or in home aged care services they receive. This is a free service. To speak confidentially with an Advocate call 9479 7566 or 1800 655 566 in country areas.

In this Edition

- **Preventing financial abuse**
- **Grandparents take on the parenting**
- **Home medicine reviews**
- **Enduring Power of Guardianship**



Preventing Financial Abuse

On 26th October 2009 the Council on the Ageing invited Advocare to speak to seniors during Seniors Week regarding financial health awareness. The talk was held in the Alexander Library, Perth.

Advocare was one of many speakers. Others included Centrelink, Westscheme and Seniors Cards. All agencies provided updated information about how to gain the most from applicable benefits or superannuation.

Sheree Beaton, from Advocare, provided practical information about how to protect oneself from becoming a victim of financial abuse. Financial abuse is "the illegal or improper use of a person's finances or property by their family or friends". The talk included examples of issues dealt with by Advocare and how our advocates can assist. A discussion on the need to carefully choose the person appointed as an Enduring Power of Attorney followed with a brief description of how an EPA should work. Attendees were informed that in depth information should be sought from the Office of the Public Advocate.

The information was well received and questions from the floor were answered. It became apparent that many people who have an EPA in place are unaware of how simple the process to revoke them is, providing the Donor still has decision making capacity.

(Office of the Public Advocate telephone advisory service: 1300 858 455)

Unit 1/190 Abernethy Road
Belmont WA 6104

rights@advocare.org.au

Ph (08) 9479 7566
Ph 1800 655 566
(country callers)

Lotteries House, 180 Marine Terrace
Geraldton WA 6530

beverleyh@advocare.org.au

Ph (08) 9964 4887
Mob 0400 644 887

Examples of Financial Abuse	Preventing Financial Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sale of older adult's home and keeping the money ■ Pressure to hand over anticipated inheritance ■ Pressure for gift or loan of money ■ Taking money from older adult's bank account ■ Power of Attorney not acting in best interests of the older person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don't be pressured to hand over inheritance prematurely ■ Don't give others your PIN or other bank details ■ Be clear if money is a loan or a gift ■ Write out legal contracts if lending any money or jointly owning property ■ Think carefully before becoming a guarantor for someone ■ Don't sign anything you have not completed yourself

Grandparents take on the Parenting

Current social circumstances have led to many grandparents raising grandchildren, sometimes without the help of the parents or assistance from government and other services.

It is not uncommon for grandparents of all cultures to fear that children will be removed by government departments like DCP (Department for Child Protection) should they not be satisfied with the grandparents' health or financial circumstances. DCP sets the safety and welfare of children as a priority but they have a family focused approach to working with children, families and communities.

Sometimes when grandparents let Centrelink know of their situation, and begin to receive support payments for the children, the parents return and resume care. Some do this primarily to ensure that they continue to receive Centrelink benefits. Once secured, they return the children to the grandparent.

This may be a form of financial abuse and emotional abuse. To speak to an advocate call [9479 7566](tel:94797566).

The Department for Communities has published a very useful brochure to help connect grandparents with the variety of assistance available. This is available at www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/Communities/Seniors/Publications/ or you can contact DFC on [6217 8855](tel:62178855)

If you experience or become aware of issues relating to mistreatment of an older person call Advocare on 9479 7566 for information or to speak with an advocate.



Useful Contact Numbers

Aboriginal Medical Services	9421 3888
Carers WA	1300 227 377 (Freecall 1800 811 747)
Red Cross Carer Respite Services	9325 5111 (Freecall 1800 059 059)
Crisis Care (24 Hour Service)	9223 1111 (Freecall 1800 199 008 country areas)
Mental Health Emergency Response Line	1300 555 788 (metro) 1800 676 822 (country)
Salvation Army Family Support Centre	9260 9599

Home Medicines Reviews

A Home Medicines Review is a service that allows a thorough check of all the medicines you are taking by a pharmacist, at the request of your GP, and with your agreement. The review usually takes place in your home, at a time convenient to you. A review will help you to better understand your medicines and would include information about how to take them and where medicines should be stored. The pharmacist will also check that your prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines and vitamins are appropriate to take together.

WHO CAN HAVE A HOME MEDICINES REVIEW?

Anyone living in their own home can have a Home Medicines Review if their GP thinks their condition and the medicines they are taking make the review worthwhile. Some situations are more likely to put people at risk of medicine-related problems, such as: taking a lot of medicines (being prescription, over-the-counter or complementary); recent changes to your medication routine (doses or medicines); attending a number of different doctors, both GPs and specialists; attending a number of different pharmacies (different generic drugs) or recently having come out of hospital.

Your GP can refer you to have a Home Medicines Review after thinking about your medication needs. Anyone - you, your carer, a family member, your pharmacist or community nurse - can ask the doctor if this service might be helpful for you. If you agree, only your GP can refer you for a Home Medicines Review.

**For more information speak to your GP.
(Information provided by the Pharmacy Guild of
Australia—WA)**



Enduring Power of Guardianship (EPG)

Recently, our Advocates attended training on Enduring Power of Guardianship.

This new legislation will allow Western Australian adults to plan for how personal, lifestyle and treatment decisions would be made on their behalf in the event that an accident or illness leaves them unable to make such decisions for themselves. The Regulations are now being considered by the Parliament.

EPG powers would only come into effect if the person has lost capacity and it will be possible to appoint more than one person as your EPG. An enduring power of guardianship is complementary to an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA). An Enduring Power of Attorney deals in financial matters and the enduring power of guardianship deals with a person's medical, personal and lifestyle issues.

Further information will be available on-line and in hard copy from the Office of the Public Advocate.

Website: www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au
Telephone: 1300 858 455.

Once the legislation is proclaimed, the EPG forms and explanatory guides will also be available on the Office of the Public Advocate's website and through the State Law Publisher.



Reference: http://www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au/E/enduring_power_of_guardianship

Free Guest Speaker or Community Group Training

Would you like an advocate to visit your Adult Day Centre, Residents and Relatives Meeting or a community / social group you attend?

Your speaker can explain

- Examples of elder abuse and how to safeguard your rights
- The Rights and Responsibilities of Home and Community Care Clients (If relevant to your group)
- The Rights and Responsibilities of Residential Aged Care Clients (If relevant to your group)
- Complaints processes and assistance available

Phone the Education Coordinator on **9479 7566** to request a guest speaker or education session. Sessions are generally 30 – 60 minutes.

Our address: Unit 1, 190 Abernethy Road, Belmont WA 6104

Phone: 9479 7566

Country Callers: 1800 655 566

Email: rights@advocare.org.au

Web: www.advocare.org.au